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A follow-up analysis of internal communication in the local subsidiary of a multinational corporation.

Case: Lufthansa Cargo

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<p>Internal communication gained significance after scholars discovered that companies' financial and strategic performance depends on its effectiveness. This fact increased actuality of the topic, which inspired the author to conduct internal communication research for the case company, where she worked as an intern.</p> <p>The following research is a follow-up analysis on the previous thesis in 2010. The research question aims to discover key internal communication trends that occurred in the case company after 2010, when the previous research was conducted. The objective is to detect the weak and strong points in Lufthansa Cargo and provide recommendations to management, if needed.</p> <p>Selected research methods were exploratory research and qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the sampling technique and the study was conducted over a six-month period. The study did not cover the whole case company but rather focused on the local subsidiary, namely the Helsinki office. Hence, the author considered only those challenges or aspects coming from the head office, which strongly related to the Helsinki office.</p> <p>The research showed that state of internal communication has visibly improved during the last 8 years. Lack of communication interactivity as well as coordination issues were resolved by the group leader and by the unexpected effects of organisational change. Current positive trends include two-way communication process, channel richness and effective meeting structure. Information overload, inconsistent communication channels and organisational structure were some of the factors identified as challenges affecting internal communication of the Helsinki office.</p> <p>In conclusion, only few recommendations were provided to management. Some of these include possible channel amount reduction and more group activities and trainings involving operational team.</p>	
Keywords	Organisational communication, internal communication, communication channels, communication strategy, effective internal communication

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research subject and research question

The full name of the research paper is the *follow-up analysis of internal communication in the local subsidiary of a multinational corporation. Case: Lufthansa Cargo*. The research question aims to discover key internal communication trends, which occurred in the case company after 2010, a year when the previous internal communication research was conducted. The objective is to detect the weak and strong points in the case company and provide recommendations to the management, if needed, such as actions to be taken to tackle the identified issues. The research question of the thesis comes from the objective: *“What major changes in internal communication occurred in the case company after 8 years? What are the strong and weak points of internal communication in Lufthansa Cargo? What recommendations, if any, could be provided to the management to improve internal communication?”* The following thesis covers internal communication processes in the Helsinki office only. Thus, communication from and to the head office in Frankfurt will not be considered.

The author created a detailed framework of organisational communication, internal communication and some organisational behaviour literature, which was used to evaluate the effectiveness of internal communication in the organisation. The author slightly considered intercultural communication to examine Lufthansa Cargo’s multicultural aspects in the Helsinki office. Finally, the qualitative research was conducted during the period of several months to establish appropriate frameworks and to identify potential weaknesses and strong points in internal communication of Lufthansa Cargo. The chosen research method was individual interviews of Lufthansa Cargo employees in the local subsidiary. The sampling method was semi-structured interviews.

The Helsinki subsidiary of Lufthansa Cargo was analysed in 2010 for efficiency and effectiveness of internal communication. However, since then, some major changes had occurred. As a result, a current research issue is still valid. Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki office experienced major changes since 2010. However, no monitoring of

potential progress or worsening of communication was done. Creating a follow-up analysis of internal communication in Lufthansa Cargo brought up new challenges and trends, which can enable the company to deal with the current situation objectively and successfully.

Since 40s until approximately 80s, internal communication was not considered as a discipline that affects the overall performance of the companies. Rather, it was a discipline that was focusing on standard vertical delivery of corporate messages without considering informal communication channels such as grapevine. Starting in the 90s, researchers and scholars made a boost in understanding internal communication. During the research stage, no gaps were identified in availability of classic literature and paper books related to this topic. However, there was a lack of online peer reviewed journals availability on internal communication trends and tendencies online. By summarizing literature perspectives, internal communication is now fully recognized and attempted to be applied in the companies. It was numerously established that transparency, appreciated feedback and free flow of information within the organisation improves employee engagement and boosts the business results on external releval making internal communication a financial drive and competitive advantage.

1.2 Literature overview

The author precisely reviewed available literature before choosing the final sources to include into theoretical framework. Most of the chosen books were written or updated after 2012. Preference was given to the latest editions, as those sources generally include latest updates on the topic and innovative strategies and models. As a result, several prominent literature sources in addition to online articles and news on internal communication established the following framework.

Ruck's book *Exploring Internal communication (2013)* became part of the framework as it accurately presents evolvement of the discipline since its early appearance. This book is one of the newest pieces of research on internal communication and gives description of its past and current trends. The book is both research-based and innovative, giving new perspectives to the subject. The book of Lu (2003) highlights the organisational communication gaps in the companies and gives interesting insights into

the consequences of ignoring or blocking internal communication flow. The author gives an impressive effect of grapevine communication or so-called word of mouth. Several articles give opinions on upcoming trends. For instance, Atchison, Bursik, Bursik and Rotzinger (2017), Kowal (2017) and Eisenhauer, (2018) articles present a modern picture of the direction in which internal communication is now moving towards. Stuart and Sarow, (2007), open library (2018), and Robbins and Judge (2017) are sources which were actively used in describing communication processes. Dale Carnegie (1936) and Heron (1942) were significant in presenting the appearance stage of communication subject. Redding & Tompkins (1982) provided the author with organisational communication overview. Robbins and Judge (2017) was an essential book describing aspects of organisational communication theory. Hartley and Bruckmann (2015) was another source which was used throughout the research paper supplying various theoretical background in communication processes and effective internal communication principles. The website lumen learning (2017) has given the author valuable insights into 4 perspectives on communication. Barrett (2014) was an excellent source which described in a detail internal communication strategy, while the books of Robbins (2017) and Argenti (2015) were applied in the section “effective internal communication”.

When analysing intercultural communication, the author used Hofstede’s (2001) cultural dimensions theory. In addition, Blundel, Ippolito and Donnarumma (2013) had valuable information and definitions related to intercultural communication. The most valuable literature for the *research* chapter was Saunders and Lewis (2017) and Kuada (2012). Lufthansa Cargo intranet page and company’s website were used to portray the case company.

After conducting preliminary literature review, no major gaps in written literature have been identified. The reason behind this conclusion can be the actuality and popularity of this topic during recent decades. A lot of research books were written by prominent writers exploring organisational communication, internal communication and cultural models in depth. This led to availability of vast range of literature, which investigates organisational and internal communication topics from all possible perspectives.

However, there has been a considerable lack of internet peer reviewed journals online available for the public. The author attempted to access a large variety of existing

communication journals and publications, which could enrich the research paper with potential management recommendations and trends in communication. Sources which the author tried to access were ABC, Emerald insight, Google Scholar, online and printed databases of Metropolia, Aalto, Haaga-Helia universities. The newest journals were either not found or access was limited to the members of the association. Alternatively, there was a price tag of 35 euros per each article offered if one wanted to access it. As a result, the author identified a gap in the availability of peer review journals on internal communication online.

2 Theoretical framework on internal and organisational communication

The author chose theoretical framework after conducting her own analysis on literature availability. In addition, she decided to include some theory, which could help to create an accurate follow-up research on Wild's (2010) work. Those choices were based on the results of the previous research paper.

2.1 Definition of communication process

Communication process is the actions between a sender and receiver that result in information transfer and correct understanding of the meaning. (Robbins and Judge, 2016) It can be vertical and lateral. Vertical communication consists of downward communication that flows from a higher-level group such as managers to the lower level group aimed to assign goals or provide job instructions. Upward one is a feedback sent to higher level group of organisations from the lower one. Lateral communication corresponds to horizontal communication between workers on equivalent level.

Definition of communication in many literature sources was based on the first significant communication process model made by Shannon and Weaver (cited in Robbins and Judge, 2016). After two decades, the model was advanced by many scholars and became known as transactional communication model. The model was proposed by Barnlund (1970). Stuart (2007) and open library (2018) consider it to be one of the most suitable communication models for business communication as the elements included in the model depict the most effective factors for successful business communication.

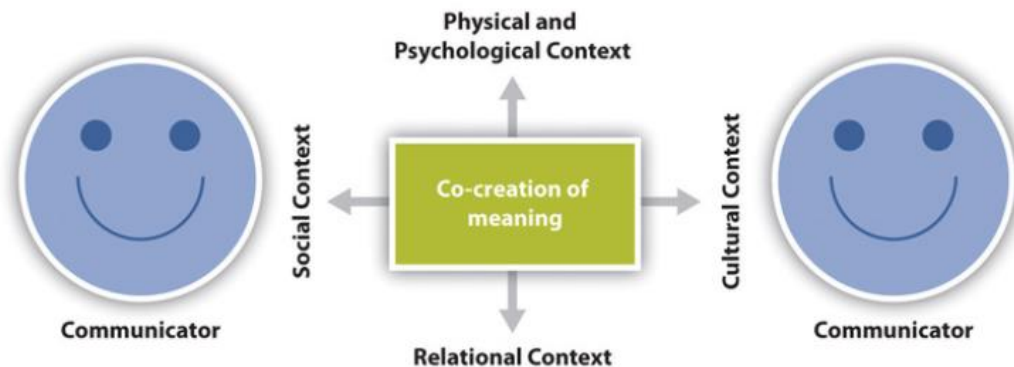


Figure 1; Transactional communication model; open library (2018)

Transactional communication model is suitable for organisations- participants do not just communicate to exchange messages. Rather, communication is aimed to create alliances, communities and engage with others. (Stuart 2007). (Robbins and Judge, 2016)

The following components are included in the transactional model:

- *Sender*- whose mission is to encode or compose a message with a meaning considering the decoding resources of receiver.
- *Receiver* needs to decode the encoded message as close as possible considering both verbal and non-verbal behaviour of a sender and other clues.
- *Channel* is the way the information has been sent such as face-to-face, email, telephone, etc. Although seeming easy, a channel choice is a complex decision which impacts effectiveness of decoding.

Open library (2018) argues that the transactional model involves participants rather than senders and receivers since both parties are simultaneously acting as a sender and receiver by taking turns in communication.

Hartley (2015) and Stuart (2007) consider a message effective when it was decoded by receiver the way it was intended by the sender. Similarly, as in systems theory which is mentioned in *internal communication theory*, the effectiveness of the message depends on to which extent sender and receiver share a common background.

- *Noise* is something that interferes during message transmission. It can be external such as loud noises or internal, which can be receiver's lack of education or cultural differences.
- *Feedback* consists of all verbal and non-verbal hints, clues and messages exchanged between sender and receiver. Feedback exists regardless of anticipating the feedback or ignoring it.
- Stuart (2007) defines *context* as something impacting a message. It refers to place of communication, occasion and time. The meaning of the message can be different to receiver depending on who the sender is or what was the environment at the time when a message was communicated.

2.2 Organisational communication overview

Ruck (2013) defines organisational communication as sending and receiving of messages among interrelated individuals within an environment aiming to achieve individual and common goals. Organisational communication is highly contextual and culturally dependent. Individuals in organisations transmit messages through face-to-face, written, and mediated channels.

The topic organisational communication was explored since 1800s and researched since 1940s. At that time, a group of specialists discussed a new concept that was emerging in the business world. Alexander Heron wrote one of the first books on internal communication, which was "*Sharing Information with Employees*" (Heron 1942). This became the first book concentrating on theory behind internal communication. Early works like *Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People* in 1936 focused on the necessity of oral presentation and written communication skills for managers to succeed in organisations. He gave a good start for further development of the discipline. Since then, organisational communication and internal communication disciplines were researched by various theorists and became an essential part of management and motivation theories.

Redding and Tompkins identified three periods in the development of organisational communication:

- Era of Preparation (1900 to 1940) - when the primary focus was on business writing, managerial communication, and persuasion
- Era of Identification and Consolidation (1940-1970) - beginning of business and industrial communication, with certain group and organisational relationships being recognized as important
- Era of Maturity and Innovation (1970-present) - empirical research increased, accompanied by innovative efforts to develop concepts and theoretical premises (*Redding & Tompkins 1982*).

2.3 Theories on internal and organisational communication

The author listed theory on internal and organisational communication in the following two sections, considering organisational communication from several perspectives and discussing types of networks in organisational communication.

2.3.1 Organisational communication theory

Organisational communication's evolvement can be understood better if looking at it from four different perspectives. Those are classic management perspective, human relations, HR, systems, and cultural perspectives.

Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol and Max Weber tried to apply scientific solutions to organisations. For instance, Taylor focused on delivering command messages from upper management to employees. This sort of communication was called cascaded and was aimed on giving clear instructions to managers of what to deliver to employees without delay, interruption or information loss. Fayol highlighted horizontal communication. (*Ruck, 2013*) Theory X corresponds very well to the following view on organisational communication. Workers are presumed to be lazy and unmotivated from the start, meaning that machinery approach to people and harsh control is the solution.

Human relations and human resources perspective included human satisfaction, needs, and participation as a means of creating effective organisations and productive employees. For instance, the most prominent theory created in human relations approach is theory Y, which assumes that workers are self-motivated and want to be successful. As a result, managers began to encourage feedback making human

relationships focus on motivating employee productivity. In HR approach, theory Z received a lot of credit for promoting values such as lifetime employment, teamwork, and collective responsibility.

The systems perspective allowed researchers to understand organisations as an organism with interdependent entities. It states that collectively, individuals in organisations achieve more than they can independently. This perspective focuses on the interactions between people and assumes that all people in the organisation impact organisational outcomes. Finally, the cultural perspective understands organisations as unique cultures with their own sets of values, and basic assumptions. The climate of an organisation is part of this perspective, which helps to reveal how an organisation impacts its members, and vice versa. (Lumen Learning 2017)

Organisational communication consists of formal and informal networks (Robbins and Judge, 2016). Formal networks can include from several people to hundreds of people, which creates an enormous complexity in organisation. To describe networks more clearly, Robbins (2016) has identified three small formal network types: chain, wheel and all channel networks. Chain network presents itself as a formal chain of command with basic communication channels chain mimics a rigid three-level communication. A wheel network relies on the presence of a strong leader; communication goes up and down from leader to each participator separately. Finally, all channel networks can be referred in practice as self-managed teams, which is a network allowing all members to freely communicate with each other. Robbins (2016) argues that all networks are essential in organisational communications and should be applied at the right time.

Robbins (2016) and Hartley (2015) do not underestimate the significance of informal channel, the grapevine. Robbins (2016) states that approximately 75% of employees find out about company news through the grape vine first. In Hartley (2015) Gary Kreps (1990) defines grapevine as “communication that develops among the organisation members and is not necessarily prescribed by the formal structure and hierarchy of the organisation but grows out of organisation members’ curiosity, interpersonal attraction and social interaction”. Hartley (2015) emphasises that all organisational communication channels have emotions and relationship aspect in it. If the company can deliver information through formal channels only and ignoring coexistence of informal once creates a false view and usage of communication

process. *Lu (2003)* highlights that the most meaningful information, which people trust much more than from the management, is informal information presented in a form of small talk and gossips. Information flow by grapevine is faster than any formal organisational channel. Trying to block this informal line can lead to various consequences such as the increase of grapevine, but in more negative context.

2.3.2 Internal communication theory

Through the history there were several communication models:

Process communication model was the first important communication model established by Shannon and Weaver (1955.) It describes a linear communication process consisting of two individuals, a sender and a receiver connected via a telephone line. The concept includes the noise which was mean to be background sounds during the phone calls, and the message. (Stuart, Sarow, 2007).

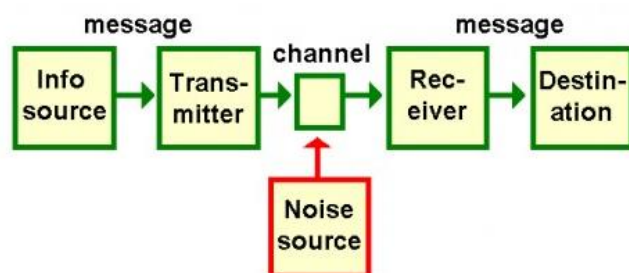


Figure 2; linear communication process model; *Communication Studies (2018)*

A *sender* is a party creating a message and attempting to convey it to someone else. Communication process can start when sender has a clear message formulated in mind. *Encoding* means converting the message into appropriate transmission format. In face-to-face or telephone communication the format would be spoken words. Content of words is influenced by many factors such as cultural background, emotional state, etc. The meaning of the message is what was communicated to receiver. Message can contain a variety of elements including facts, ideas, opinions, believes and emotions.

According to Robbins and Judge (2016), when the message reaches the receiver, *decoding* begins translating the message into understandable form. Noise represents

communication barriers disrupting clarity of the message including information overload, cultural differences or others. It is thought that semantic and environmental noise can take place during communication. Environmental noise is external disturbing factors such as loud surroundings, whereas semantic noise is inability to accurately decode a message.

Blundel (2013) states that there are many critics of process communication theory since it considers sender and receiver as isolated participants, who cannot change roles. The latter model was modified by adding a feedback loop. Hartley (2015) shares the view about the advantage of improved model. Cited in Hartley (2015), Robbins (1998) and Hargie et al (1999) had slightly different emphasize on it but stated similar components of the new model, which was called linear model of communication with feedback, where feedback was referred to signals received by the sender in the form of body language expression.

Although being improved, the model did not fully correspond to the real-life communication ignoring interactivity between sender and receiver. That is why a model, analogous to Clappitt circuit approach was designed. It is called systems model. Hartley (2015) states that this model is a two-way process including several cycles before sender achieves the aim or abandons it. Shared background is highlighted as a crucial aspect for succinct and effective information encoding. The more shared background the sender and receiver have, the less effort must be invested in information encoding and decoding. Feedback is as essential as background in the systems model. However, simultaneous reactions and feedbacks are not presumed in this model. (Open library, 2018)

Stuart (2007) and open library (2018) acknowledge that previous models, despite being more advanced, treat senders and receivers in the same way as computers- with one-time goal and specific message in mind not taking account of role of context and communication in the long run. This way, in view of these weaknesses, Barnlund (1970) cited in Stuart (2007), has created more comprehensive, translational communication model. Stuart (2007), however, notes that in some cases the oldest linear models could be used in the organisation. In some cases, it is the best to transmit information in linear way to several receivers without the need for the feedback.

2.4 Communication channels

Channel means a mode by which communication is transferred. The sender must carefully select the channel based on receiver's needs and expectations.

Channels can be generally divided into four categories: oral, written, printed and electronic. Oral communication is one of the oldest one used by humans. Written one is considered by Stuart (2007) to be a second oldest channel followed by printed one. Electronic communication is the latest creation followed by computers invention and advancement. It has brought the new advantages into internal communication as well as uncertainty and new rules. A wide range of electronic channels was not thoughtfully explored in such a short spine of time.

There are several events that should happen in the best-case scenario. The sender must encode the message clearly, while the receiver must pay careful attention to the message. The right mode as well as avoidance of the noise are factors to ensure successful message delivery.

Verbal or oral internal communication consists of several channels: face-to-face communication, telephone, meetings and videoconferencing. Face-to-face channel is of the most effective and straight-forward one. It allows the colleagues to exchange information using both verbal and non-verbal communication with as little noise as possible. However, face-to-face channel needs a balance of usage because of being time consuming. If it is overused by participants, the focus of the message might fade decreasing efficiency. Secondly, one must be aware of the signals he or she is sending through face-to-face channel. Wrongly used tone of voice or informal style instead of formal can affect the receiver. (Robbins and Judge, 2016)

Phone call is best used when face-to-face communication is not necessary but using written channels will take several rounds. The biggest disadvantage of the phone call is the possibility to lose the phone connection or call the receiver at the wrong time when he or she is driving, for instance. Meetings are an essential channel allowing participants to simultaneously exchange critical information between one another. Meeting allows participants to have interactive communication if the meeting is planned

properly. Videoconferencing can be an appropriate channel when a physical meeting is not possible but two-way communication is needed. (Stuart, 2007)

Written internal communication is comprised of company's intranet page, email, printed materials, blogs, social networking such as Yammer. (Robbins and Judge, 2016)
Intranet page and printed materials such as a weekly or monthly newsletter supply the employees with internal company news and updates. Email is a widely used written channel with various benefits. It is fast, can reach multiple receivers and allows participants to store received information. Blog can act as a powerful tool to showcase company's actions and performance internally. Social networking can benefit some employees by allowing them to communicate rapidly and exchange information.

It is possible to choose the right channel by understanding the channel richness and the content of the message to be transmitted. Channel richness is the amount of information transmittable during the communication action. The choice of channel depends on how routine the message is. If the message is of low complexity, memos or email can be used. On the other hand, telephone conversations, meetings and face-to-face channels are in priority when information is of extreme complexity or if organisation experiences a crisis and requires effective daily communication with employees. (Robbins and Judge, 2016)

2.5 Culture and organisational communication

Blundel (2013) discusses cultural diversity as an asset for organisations. However, when people with different cultures get together, strong barriers might occur, and communicators often face challenges due to different expectations and habits in communication. Management role in paying attention to the cultural peculiarities in organisations has grown considerably together with globalisation and greater international mobility of labour force around the world. Companies increasingly invest resources in appropriate cultural trainings to educate employees about the scope of cultural differences. Multicultural workplaces became common as the diversity of cultures in the organisation provide rich opportunities for organisations to prosper. However, it is important to develop the strategies to possibly tackle intercultural issues arising in the organisation.

Culture has various definitions. Still, organisational scholars adopted the definition proposed by Kroeber and Kluckholm (1952):

“Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour. It is acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the other hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioned elements of further action.”

2.5.1 The compass model

Wendy Hall cited in Blundel, Ippolito and Donnarumma (2013) claims there are three components forming organisational culture, ABC. “A” stands for artefacts being visible cultural elements including language and manners. “B” refers to behaviour: decision-making process and communication style. “C” characterizes core morals, beliefs and culture, which is the deepest level of culture. Blundel (2013) makes a parallel with the “C” element by mentioning the iceberg metaphor for culture. The metaphor is often referred for individuals and their culture showing that the core cultural values are hidden under the surface, and only explicit and tangible cultural aspects are visible from the first glance.

Hall cited in Blundel (2013) identified two terms- assertiveness and responsiveness, based on which she has concluded four distinctive types of organisational cultures. She views assertiveness as the degree to which the organisation’s behaviour is seen as forceful or directive. Responsiveness is defined as the degree to which the organisation’s behaviour is thought by others to be emotionally expressive. Based on above stated dimensions, four organisational styles were proposed which can characterise the organisational culture:

- *North style*: low assertiveness and low responsiveness
- *South style*: high assertiveness and high responsiveness
- *East style*: low assertiveness and high responsiveness
- *West style*: high assertiveness and low responsiveness (Blundel, 2013)

2.5.2 Cultural dimensions

Researchers always tried to describe the culture accurately and capture cultural occurrences into written statements. Hofstede was able to do so with simple but practical model of cultural dimensions. The following model is applicable in HR, communication, intercultural studies, psychology and more areas. Hofstede defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another”. (Hofstede, 2001)

Geert Hofstede studied how values in the workplace are influenced by culture. He analysed large database of employee values scores collected by IBM. The data was gathered from 116.000 respondents between 1967 and 1973 covering more than 70 countries. This is considered as the largest organisational study ever. The values that distinguish countries from each other could be grouped statistically into four clusters. These four groups became the Hofstede dimensions of national culture: Power Distance (PDI), Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV), Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). (Hofstede, G. 2001). Two more dimensions have been added with the further edition in 2001.

In the latest cultural dimensions model, Hofstede identified several key elements:

- *Power Distance (PDI)*- expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
- *Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)* refers to the extent to which the individual's goals and desires or the group's goals and desire are given greater importance.
- *Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)*-the society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct, while femininity occurs when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest and tender.
- *Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)*- expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity
- *Long-Term Orientation (LTO)* - is the degree to which people value long term goals and has a pragmatic approach

- *Indulgence versus Restraint*- the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses based on the way they were raised. (Hofstede, G., 2001).

Figure 3 on page 19 is the extract from Hofstede's countries comparison tool listing cultural dimensions of Germany and Finland. Germany and Finland were two countries chosen for cultural comparison. Firstly, case company's location is Finland while most employees as also Finns. On the other hand, the case company originates from Germany, while the top management is mostly German employees. Despite general similarities in some dimensions and despite being geographically close, Finland and Germany face key differences in perceiving masculinity and femininity, long term orientation and indulgence. (Hofstede Insights, 2018)

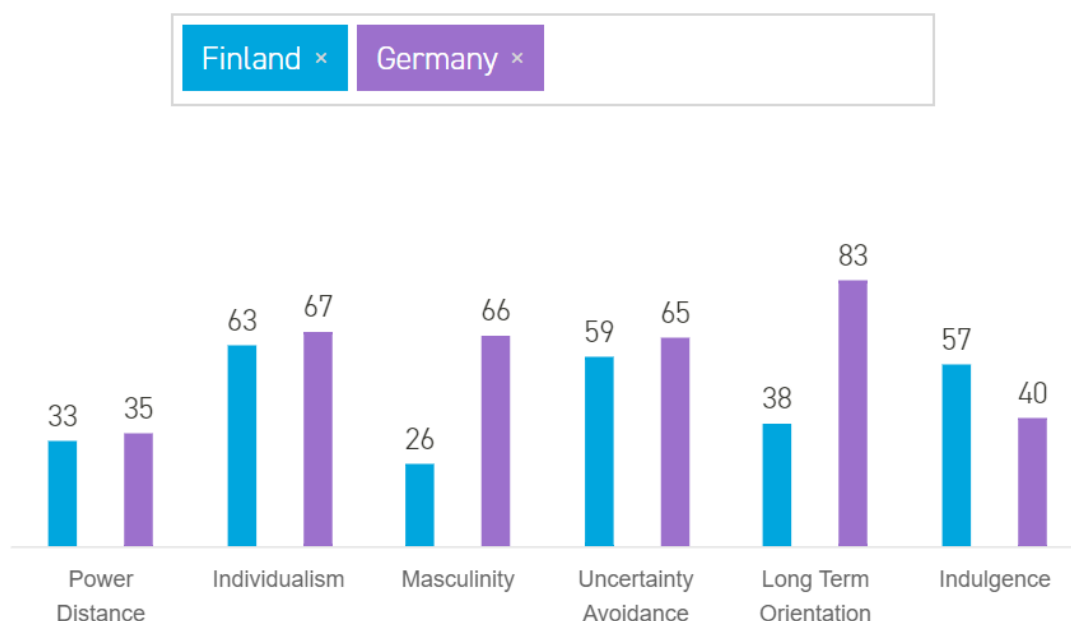


Figure 3; Culture compass of Germany and Finland; Hofstede Insights (2018)

Although Hofstede's dimensions are being argued more nowadays, it remains to be one of the most extensive cultural researchers together with Trompenaars. (Blundel, Ippolito and Donnarumma, 2013)

2.6 Communication challenges

Robbins (2016) identifies several basic but most common challenges arising in internal communication. The first commonly known challenge is information overload. Humans

have a limited memory and data processing capacity. If the information volume exceeds the limit, employees are no longer able to sort information. As a result, employees choose to ignore excessive information or forget it, which poses a threat to effective communication.

Selective perception was mentioned by the author in relation to communication noise. It is the tendency of the receiver to process information selectively based on personal motivations, background, culture and frames. The challenge is that the receivers project their interests and views while decoding the message. For example, if the interviewer thinks that all female applicants put family above the career, interviewer will be able to find signs of it because of selective perception.

Filtering takes place when the sender has a purpose to manipulate the information to present it more favourably to receiver. Filtering occurs because of status differences or company structure. In hierarchical companies it is easier for managers to use filtering.

Emotions are another communicational challenge. Individuals are likely to interpret information differently when they are angry than when they are excited or happy. Employees in a good mood tend to accept a message at face value, while frustrated employees will be very critical to the content of any message they receive. Generally, symptoms such as depression have destructive influence on efficiency of internal communication.

Rumours and lack of feedback are considered as another challenge. Incomplete feedback results in ineffective communication because of damaging interactivity of communication process. Rumours on the other hand, arise when the internal communication channels do not deliver enough of important updates and information. Blundel (2013) notes that nowadays many recognize the importance of communication activities. Yet, many companies still use a hierarchical approach for message delivery with a small opportunity for response from the other side. Organisations keep using the one-way communication process ignoring feedback and interaction. Employees are not able to express their opinions on the news or clarify information received. That way, rumours are spreading through grapevine and employees distant themselves from organisation by stopping to participate actively in internal communication.

2.7 Internal communication strategies

Internal communication strategy became more crucial when businesses recognized the significance of organisational communication. As all employees are participants of both organisational and internal communication, it is of high importance to be able to set right communication strategies in organisation. Barrett (2014) created valuable guidelines on how to establish an internal communication strategy. She described, which elements should be included in strategy planning and which frameworks and strategic questions can assist in the following planning.

2.7.1 Establishing internal communication strategy

Barrett (2014) noted that after determining communication strategy, it is time to create a strategy plan. Communication strategy aims to determine achieving communication objectives. Barrett (2014) advises considering the context in communication strategy. Communication does not exist in the vacuum meaning that it is necessary to assess what the context is. Several questions can be asked to oneself to help understand the context: *What is currently happening in organisation that can affect receiving the information? What are people's implications? What are the audience's expectations of this communication medium?* (Barrett, 2014) Correct context assessment ensures that the effect of the noise is avoided as much as possible. For instance, in times of economic crisis, it is important for the organisation to consider the context that can distract or scare the employees and deliver communication effectively.

Strategic communication planning should be approached with the clearly defined method involving various skills including analytics and emotional intelligence. Barrett (2014) suggests using communication strategy framework to be able to consider all possible aspects which can prevent the communication from being effective.

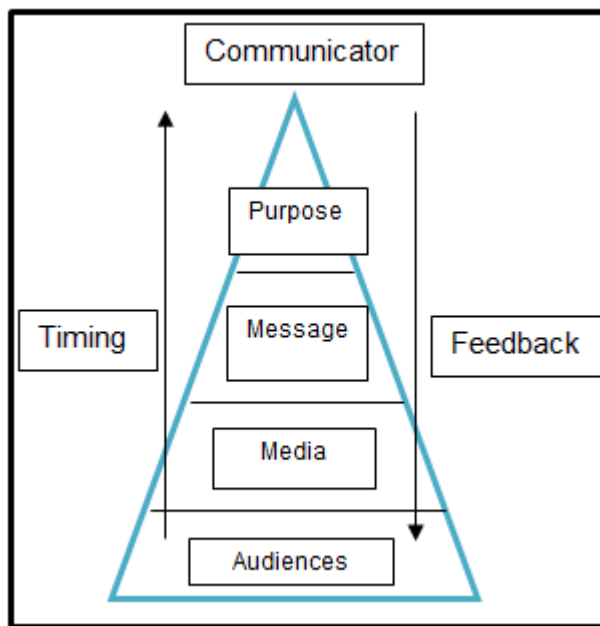


Figure 4; Communication strategy framework; Barrett (2014)

The purpose guides the direction of communication strategy and should be always linked to the overall strategy. The overall purpose should be consistent from group to group while the sub messages can have a different emphasis.

Analysing the audience is crucial in communication strategy as audience characteristics might give a direction for the strategic behaviour and shape the idea of the targeted messages. According to the communication strategy framework, audience is the foundation of all on which other components are based. It is mandatory to analyse all audience groups to tailor a specific message and communication strategy to them and approach each group uniquely. If the audience is broad and communication is complex, four additional approaches can be used to analyse the audience: by expertise, decision-making style, medium or organisational context. Organisation is divided into sectors of employees concentrating on different working areas. It is possible to target these segments by dividing them into several categories, for instance, layperson, executives and experts. The medium, purpose, and approach should differ for each separate group.

Second way to analyse the audience is by decision-making style. Cited in Barrett (2014), Harvard Business review identifies five distinctive decision-making styles. For instance, charismatics, who are excited about new ideas, need the approach of visuals

and be presented with straightforward arguments. Thinkers who are logical and academic require a lot of data. Demanding and suspicious sceptics can be pleased with the proof of information credibility. Followers need proven methods and details since they are not as confident as charismatics. Controllers are logical, analytical and sensible. Giving them a freedom of choice and well-structured information should please this group. (Barrett, 2014)

It is necessary to consider the audience's expectations based on the medium through which similar communication is usually received. For instance, receiving a message from the boss through the distribution list does not naturally call for feedback while doing the same thing in Twitter or the blog would cause different reactions and will bring responses. When communicating professionally, organisational context, organisational relationships and how they affect people's motivation also need to be considered. The following table below provides questions that should be always asked to oneself while developing communication strategy.

Table 1; Key questions to ask yourself while developing communication strategy; (Barrett, 2014)

Component	Key Questions to ask yourself while developing communication
Purpose	What is the objective one wants to accomplish?
Message	What is the overall message/ How to make a formulated message acceptable for the audience?
Medium	What is the most effective channel for reaching each audience?
Audience	Who is the primary audience? What are their interests and possible outcomes from this communication?
Communicator	Who should deliver the message and be the most credible communicator?
Timing	When should the message be delivered and in which order?
Feedback	How one will determine if the audience is receiving the messages as intended? How can one measure the impact?

2.8 Effective practices in internal communication

Transparency, appreciated feedback and freely moving flow of information within the organisation improves employee engagement and boosts the business results on external level making internal communication a financial drive and competitive advantage. Simultaneously, companies attempt to apply internal communication best practices. In the last 50 years, scholars developed effective internal communication practices which can transform communication functionality and efficiency. The author listed some of the best practices in this area.

2.8.1 Cultural guide

Robbins (2016) suggests that his cultural guide attempts to reduce misunderstanding during intercultural communication. The following advice was developed by Robbins to overcome intercultural communication challenges.

- The first principle is: *assume differences until similarity is proven*. It is less likely to make an error during intercultural communication if assuming that the other party is different until proven otherwise.
- *Emphasize description rather than interpretation or evaluation*: Evaluating someone's words create personal bias by applying one's own background. It is advised to delay judgement and observe until the situation is clearer.
- *Practice empathy*: This can be also referred to widely used term, emotional intelligence- the ability of the person to imagine him/herself in another person's situation and understanding what his/her values or frames are. Trying to see another person from a different point of view allows communicating across the cultures easier.
- *Treat your interpretations as a working hypothesis*: It is recommended to treat your own interpretation as hypothesis that still needs further testing. Assessing hypothesis with another foreign colleagues and own research helps to obtain a right understanding of the situation.

2.8.2 Six principles for making the meeting effective

Meetings are a powerful channel in internal communication fostering group decision-making. According to Stuart (2007), meetings can cause burn-out if the person is introvertive since meetings can be a distracting channel for introvertive thinkers. On the other hand, extroverts gain the feeling of accomplishment through this channel. Cited in Hartley (2015), Tropman (1996) suggests that meeting can be a mutually beneficial channel if following these six guidelines:

- *The orchestra principle* indicates that meeting participants should be analogous to the real orchestra, where manager is a conductor or in other words, facilitator making sure that everyone equally cooperates and contributes to the meeting.
- *The three characters principle* suggests that one can only do three things in the meeting and they should be done in order. First, the manager goes through all announcements. Secondly, one covers the items where decisions must be made. Finally, the items which do not need a decision should be discussed among the participants.
- *Role principle* states that the chair must act as a role model in the meeting encouraging member to openly discuss and contribute.
- *No new business rule* urges not to introduce the items which were not previously place on the agenda. This will help to avoid time wasted for unprepared discussion.
- *The imperative of proactivity* suggests including items dealing with future problems to start thinking of them in a timely manner.
- *High quality decisions principle* highlights that all decisions made should show the overall evidence of meeting quality meaning that all participants were satisfied.

Eventually, Tropman sums up the principles saying that every meeting should partially contain items from the past which perhaps were not completed earlier. Current issues should capture more than half of the meeting time. Important future topics should be slightly brought up too before they become urgent.

2.8.3 Effective internal communication guidelines

Argenti (2015) suggested his guidelines. Effective internal communication can generate a dialogue between managers and employees fostering participation and driving the company's performance.

In *communication challenges*, the lack of feedback and rumours were presented as a problem to effective communication. Argenti (2015) proposes to management to *communicate up and down* to avoid the stated challenge and increase communication effectiveness. The best solution is to communicate with employees using informal discussions and rich channels. Regular "open house" meetings should be organized for employees to address concerns to upper management directly. Direct contact to management allows employees to feel that they can impact the organisation. Communication must be two-way to create interactivity and high functionality of internal communication in the organisation. Two-way communication allows information to be rich in content and fast to be delivered. Nowadays, managers establish two-way internal communication patterns which allow for functional feedback from the employees. It is also related to the theory discussed in the chapter *channels* where it was advised on how to deliver information correctly based on channel richness. A successful two-way communication process with the right channels and ability to exchange feedback fosters company's prosperity and employees' motivations. (Stuart, Sarow, 2007)

Another way to boost upward and downward communication is through *face-to-face meetings*. Enough time should be planned for regular quarterly large meetings where all employees can directly talk to the managers and to one another. If there is no opportunity to gather all employees, video conferences with latest updates can boost the feeling of awareness of company's activities. Alternatively, forums can be held to make Q&A sessions where managers can give answers or take suggestions from employees.

With the rise of internet technologies and appearance of company's intranet pages, Argenti (2015) advises managers to take a closer look at communicating online. He also adds that in recent researches, most employees indicate the importance of the

intranet pages. A lot of important company information and news is now communicated there. It is of high importance for management to rethink how the information can be presented optimally and easily on the intranet so that company's intranet page remains dynamic and engaging.

Creating employee-oriented publications in addition to online communications is another advice. People are becoming more visual than ever, meaning that well-designed companies's newspapers or other printed materials with latest news can help employees to process higher percentage of information more easily. However, Argenti (2015) notes that such publications must be timely and useful. If information provided is dull, or if employees receive critical company news externally faster than through publications, internal communication will not be effective.

2.9 Internal communication trends

Considering the future potential development of internal communication, various sources provide opinions on upcoming trends in internal communication. Some of the greatest identified tendencies are cloud services and shared files, video conferences, interactive intranet pages and the boost in visual video and graphic content over all other technological innovations. Most modern sources found by the author identify digitalisation as the universal trend affecting internal communication.

Atchison (2017) considers that social technologies such as shared file usage will shape internal communication and foster its development. Shared files allow internal reports creation and editing. It can unite departments of organisation, which are in different geographical locations. Performance evaluation and various other matters can be completed in shared files. Eisenhauer (2018) supports the claim about popularization of the cloud and shared file services in his article. He also highlights the importance of visuals in today's communication including video content and video conferencing. Social intranet software is considered as a step forward from the regular intranet. The following technology allows employees to easily connect and exchange information between one another in a secure way. (Eisenhauer, 2018)

The article focusing on top communication trends in the year 2017 has a similar point of view on the rising importance of various kinds of video content. One of the interviewee suggests:

“There is significant use of visuals and video content; in 2017, we can expect to see more trends around visual and cutting-edge content that delivers the message and rises above the noise. We can also expect to see hyper spotted images, which gamify our news, increase message adoption and content interaction.” [Kowal, 2017]

Generally, all articles come to conclusion that there is one enormous-trend in current internal communication- digitalisation. The following term has various meanings but the most relatable is integration of digital technologies into everyday business to foster development, increase revenues or change a business model. (IGI Global, 2018) Various sources are proving one major point that digitalisation trend results in the boost of modern computer technologies, which further on increase company’s performance, in the following case, in internal communication sector.

3 Research

3.1 Overview of research methods

The main purpose of research methods is to create appropriate research design and accurately describe reasoning behind choosing specific research methods for data collection. According to Murshed and Zhang (2016), research methodology can be categorized into two groups- qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

Qualitative approach has been used more widely during recent decades. The most known qualitative research methods are observations, focus groups and qualitative interviews. John Kuada (2012) argues that observation is most often used when the research topic is sensitive. Focus groups are used to brainstorm ideas and understand collective point of view on areas related to research topic. Qualitative interviews are used to obtain opinions and reflections of the participant.

Qualitative approach is best used when the study seeks to obtain new insights about the topic. The main purpose of research is investigation rather than confirmation of pre-established concept. Quantitative research is best applied when specific hypothesis must be tested. For instance, if one wants to find differences in performance between various entities and understand some tendencies, where a lot of data collection, comparison and analysis must be done, qualitative method will be a perfect approach to find answers. This approach is more standardized and strict but allows getting needed data from big number of participants quite easily if right questions are asked. (Saunders and Lewis, 2017)

Quantitative method includes various steps in successful completion of the survey, and it requires the researcher to have a full understanding of research question and issue to formulate the right survey. A holistic approach to survey design allows a more precise and successful data collection method. Main data collection techniques in the following approach are interviews and questionnaires. (Saunders and Lewis, 2017) To succeed, questions should be tailored to participants, and idea of research should be clear. Interviews can be structured, unstructured and semi-structured. Unstructured interviews however, are related to qualitative approach and exploratory stage of research. The key in successful quantitative approach is reliability. If, under the same conditions, other researchers come to similar conclusions, the research was successful.

According to Saunders and Lewis (2017), there two different processes in research- inductive process deductive ones. Inductive process means “bottom up” approach to development of theory. After analysing already collected data, the author develops the theory accordingly. Data collection in this approach is unstructured or semi-structured as described in qualitative methods. Deductive approach proceeds from general to specific. Saunders and Lewis state that “this approach involves testing theoretical proposition by using research strategy specifically designed for its testing”.

3.2 Method choice

After considering both research approaches and processes, the author concluded that exploratory research and qualitative approach are more suitable for this thesis paper.

First, the author does not seek to test, she rather examines. The author states that the research question is examining strengths and weaknesses of internal communication in LH Cargo Helsinki and hence updating Wild's (2010) research paper results by looking at recent trends. Second, qualitative approach was chosen based on the sampling size. There are only 9 Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki employees in total. Such a small number will result in insufficient and biased data if analysing using quantitative research. Third, although the author created a follow-up research on the topic, it is not known what changes occurred, if any. Hence, the author wants to rely on reflections and opinions of all participants to come to conclusions.

Arising from the above arguments the author assumed that semi-structured qualitative interviews were the most appropriate data collection method. The author gained insights on internal communication topic after creating theoretical framework. Afterwards, interviews were conducted, and concepts established in the theory part were tested. Appropriate recommendations were then provided if they seemed necessary.

The author established several interview questions listed in the section *interview questions*. Questions were based on some theories identified in preliminary literature review and related to tendencies which arose in Wild's previous thesis in 2010. The author planned to ask these questions in a flexible way, adding or reducing the amount of questions depending on the direction of the interview. The author designed questions partly based on the previous thesis paper on internal communication done by Wild (2010). However, unlike Laura Wild, the author used the deductive approach in her research, first establishing theoretical framework based on literature review and previous research results and then comparing the results with pre-established theory.

3.3 Validity and reliability of research

There are several factors that could potentially cause limitations in the following research paper. The author listed all possible limitations below including the measures she undertook to make the research reliable and non-biased.

The interviews' language was English, which is a non-native language for both the author and the participants. Usage of foreign language can result in mutual misunderstanding between the author and interviewees. During the planning stage of data collection, the author had a chance to consult with her supervisor, who happens to be a native speaker of English. With supervisor's help, the author restructured her questions making them sound more appropriate in English language. The author could possibly misinterpret participants' answers. To prevent misunderstanding, the author has asked participants for their permission to record the interviews. This provided the opportunity to listen through the answers carefully as many times as needed and extract less biased data as a result. To ensure reliability, the author developed a list of topics which had to be discussed in addition to some predefined questions. She also created interviewee profiles, which allowed her to understand, which questions must be asked to which participants depending on their role or knowledge on the topic.

It is possible that participants tend to answer certain questions in a discrete or biased way because of nature of research which seeks for individual opinions and own reflections. If not convincing the participants of anonymity of results, inaccurate delivery of data might occur. For this reason, the author chose a comfortable isolated place for the interviews to get a relaxed feeling. Additionally, after interviews were conducted and the author finished working on the data analysis, she sent out the scripts to each participant personally to allow them to check their answers and give corrections or add some information if needed. The author believes these steps have helped to reduce the bias in interview results.

3.4 Data gathering process

The author worked in the case organisation for six months in total. She conducted the research on the internal communication topic for three months. The first three months out of six have been used for observations and developing the research question in addition to evaluating the necessity of this study.

It was concluded that the most suitable sampling technique was semi-structured interviews. (Saunders and Lewis, 2017) The choice of the sampling technique was based on uncertainty. It cannot be known which answers participants can potentially

give. Hence, questions should vary and be open ended to allow flexibility and freedom of thought for interviewees.

During the data gathering process, the author has ensured that the interview process was based on the free-will, and the idea of the research was clearly understood by everyone. The following steps were undertaken:

- A pilot test was attempted before the actual interviews. Interview questions were practised, the recorder was checked before the start of the interviews and the list of topics to be covered during interview was established.
- The author has not paid attention to the order of the questions. The sequence depended on the flow of the interview.
- She did not ask some topics or questions to specific participants because those questions were not relevant to specific interviewees. However, the author has also asked extra questions to some participants, when greater detail was needed.
- The author has ensured the participants that the interview is only conducted if they personally agree to do so and they are not being obliged to complete it. Additionally, permission to use the recorder was asked of each participant.

In the beginning, the author announced to colleagues face-to-face about her research paper idea and the goal of it. She emphasized the need for personal interviews and asked each person if they were able to participate. She gave an approximation of the interview length, which was on average 30 minutes and asked participants to choose a convenient time for them. She then offered them a chance to see the script of their answers later, thanked them for participating in the interviews and ensured them of the anonymity of published results. As a result, the author conducted 8 personal interviews, which were approximately 30 minutes in length.

Shortly after the interviews, the author listened to the recordings in addition to reading through her notes again. This allowed her to create a precise script of each participant's answers. Interviews were anonymous. No details about age, sex and similar details were asked from participants as it was not relevant for the research.

Interviews were recorded only for the personal usage of the author. Hence, recordings are not included in the research paper. Recording was done to ensure successful data analysis process as accurate data guarantees better validity. The author interviewed 8 employees out of 9 in the organisation. One person was omitted because of the short time he/she had worked in the case company. Allowing some flexibility in the amount of questions asked, the author was able to accurately portray the situation and thus give more detailed recommendations to the management and guidelines for the further research. All profiles of Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki office employees were described in greater detail on page 36 in section 4.1.4.

4 Case company: Lufthansa Cargo Finland

In the following sections, the author presented Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki subsidiary, which was the case company. The author mentioned company's key activities as well as worldwide internal communication process in brief. She then presented key findings arising from the previous research paper on Lufthansa Cargo in 2010.

4.1 Introduction of the case company

Lufthansa Cargo is one of the most successful and world leading air freight carriers in terms of company size and high quality of service. In 2016, Lufthansa Cargo transported approximately 1.6 million tons of freight and mail. The cargo load factor is 66.8 percent. 4,500 people are employed by Lufthansa Cargo worldwide including 83 nationalities and 80 trainees. Regular national and international training courses are provided for the employees on a constant basis. (Lufthansa Cargo Ag, 2018)

Lufthansa Cargo focuses on the airport-to- airport business. It is a full range service provider. The cargo carrier operates in 300 destinations in approximately 100 countries. It has its own fleet in addition to passenger aircraft belly capacity of its own and that of Austrian Airlines and Eurowings. The cargo business is done through Frankfurt Airport. Lufthansa Cargo is a wholly owned Lufthansa subsidiary of Deutsche Lufthansa AG. It was founded in 1994. Lufthansa Cargo's capital is 100 million euros. (Lufthansa Cargo Ag, 2018)

Lufthansa Cargo offers tailored logistics solutions for challenging freight consignments. With its extensive service offer, it can ship temperature-sensitive pharmaceuticals, large animals such as horses and heavy machinery parts. Lufthansa Cargo is known for having a suitable solution for every consignment. *Standard, Express and Special* are its products with an option of add-on services. Lufthansa Cargo provides 31 different types of unit load devices (ULD) – pallets and containers for shipments. In total, the ULDs are moved some three million times per year. Hubs are in Frankfurt, Munich and Vienna. Airline has a high amount of freight connections- 73 per week. Measurement of quality happens through Cargo 2000 (C2K). Cargo 2000 is a self-funded IATA (International Air Transport Association) sponsored interest group of major airlines and freight forwarders. It aims at implementing a new quality management system for the worldwide air cargo industry. (Iata.org, 2018) Continuous process management is always taking place, and Lufthansa Cargo is constantly oriented to the customer's needs and requirements. (Lufthansa Cargo Ag., 2018)

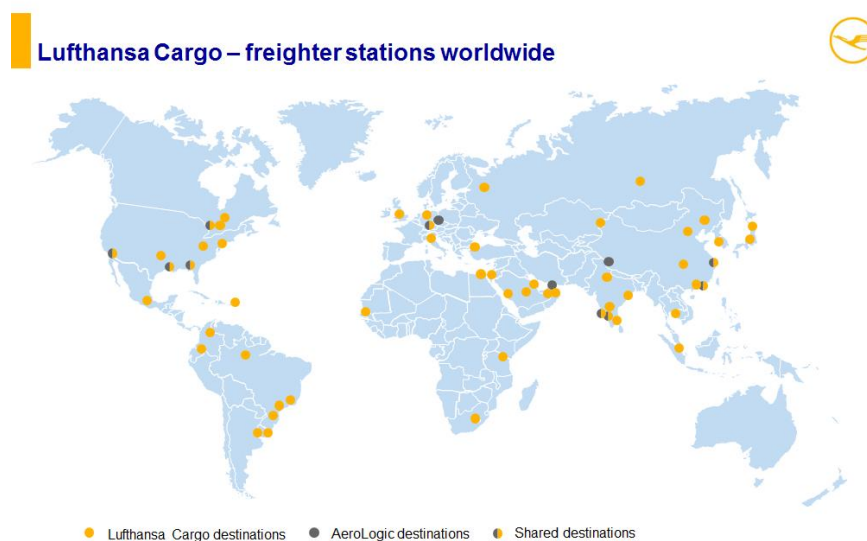


Figure 5; Lufthansa Cargo group connections around the globe; Lufthansa Cargo Ag (2010)

Lufthansa Cargo Regional division consists of 8 regions:

- Region Germany - FRA F/XD
- Region Eastern & Northern Europe - FRA F/XE
- Region Western Europe - FRA F/XW
- Region Middle East & Africa - FRA F/XM
- Region USA & Canada - ATL F/XU

- Region Latin America & Caribbean - SAO F/XL
- Region Northern Asia - SHA F/XA
- Region South & South East Asia - SIN F/XS

The region Eastern & Northern Europe - FRA F/XE is divided into the following 8 markets:

- Sales & Handling Denmark & Iceland (CPH F/GC)
- Sales & Handling Southeast Europe (BUD FG/C)
- *Sales & Handling Finland & Baltics (HEL F/GC)*
- Sales & Handling Turkey (IST FG/C)
- Sales & Handling Russia & CIS (MOW FG/C)
- Sales & Handling Sweden & Norway (STO FG/C)
- Sales & Handling Austria (VIE FG/C)
- Sales & Handling Poland & Czech Republic (WAW FG/C)

Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki subsidiary belongs to the market HEL F/GC together with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. (Lufthansa Cargo Ag., 2018)

4.1.1 Internal Communication Channels of Lufthansa Cargo worldwide

Lufthansa Cargo's internal communication worldwide consists of five main channels.

In the news App One it is possible to find information about the LSG Group and Lufthansa Group at any place and at any time.



Figure 6; News App One; Lufthansa Cargo Ag (2018)

One of the biggest internal communication channels is the corporate Intranet – eBase.

There, all information, news and tools of interest to employees is published. All current and previously published magazines can be found here. It also contains the CSC database, an important reference tool listing Lufthansa Cargo location worldwide.

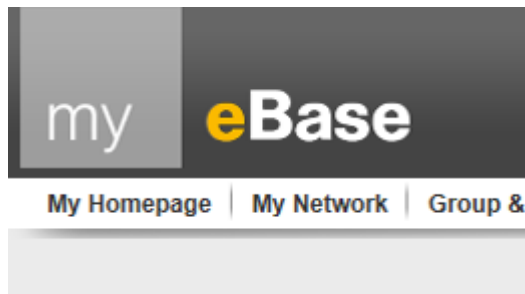


Figure 7; Lufthansa Cargo E-Base; Lufthansa Cargo Ag. (2018)

The third channel is called “perspectives”. It is an internal upper management electronic newsletter published whenever corporate developments warrant an issue. It covers confidential matters regarding, but not limited to, corporate policy, governance, strategy and strategic projects human resources and IT. Based on its content, the distribution of Perspectives is restricted.

“Topics” are distributed via e-mail whenever an important issue needs to be communicated quickly, for example, to announce changes in management positions, new customer contracts etc. Depending on the scope of content, topics are either distributed globally, regionally or within a specific business area.



Figure 8; Topics; Lufthansa Cargo Ag. (2018)

Industry News is the subscription-based e-mail newsletter containing news concerning the airline and airline catering industries published five days a week. The industry news archive, with its compendium of articles, offers additional research options and lets

subscribers customize their own newsletter based on categories, language and frequency.

4.1.2 Internal Communication channels of Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki

Internal communication in Helsinki office differs from Lufthansa Cargo's worldwide internal communication channels. The main difference is in the size of the Helsinki team. As only 9 employees communicate to each other in the Helsinki office on internal level, there is no visible benefit in having separate printed materials, special online magazines or social network channels, which are only addressed for Helsinki office. In general, Helsinki office does not use any of the above listed worldwide channels for internal communication except for eBase. Worldwide channels are used by Helsinki team for receiving news or updates from the head office in hierarchical way. Otherwise, most used communication channels among Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki team members are email, meetings, face-to-face communication and phone calls.

Internal communication process in the Helsinki office is described and analysed further in the section *functionality and interactivity of internal communication*.

4.1.3 2010 research findings on internal communication

In her bachelor's thesis for Haaga-Helia in 2010, Laura Wild has stated that a follow-up research on the improvements and developments in internal communication processes within the case company could be conducted in several years' time. She saw it was important to monitor the situation. Her recommendations given to Lufthansa Cargo management could now be revised. (Wild, 2010)

In her research paper, Wild concludes that the internal communication situation in Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki office is as follows:

“During the study, challenges especially in relation to information flow and message coordination were detected. The communication was highly hierarchical, resulting in several relays and blocks in the message distribution chain. This resulted in delays and information gaps among other things. Furthermore, lack of chance for interactivity, especially bottom-up, was detected.

These resulted in, for example, lower motivation and bad atmosphere. A need for greater transparency, possibilities to participate, locally adapted communication guidelines, training, and increased cultural awareness were possible solutions to the problems and challenges.” [Wild, 2010]

Wild identified various internal communication challenges including information overload and lack of information. Difficulties in understanding messages by different participants was another identified issue. Back in 2010, intercultural communication challenges were also part of the disruptions in organisational communication. On the leadership side, she noted that there is a lack of planning and coordination of communication activities, which can also relate to the above-mentioned hierarchy problem in the organisation. As a result, she concludes that there is generally a lack of interactivity in internal communication.

Looking at key differences between two research papers, Wild based her theoretical framework on various books and articles in Finnish language. On the contrary, the author used solely English language sources. Additionally, Wild’s literature overview is mostly dated to 90s-early 2000s as the research paper was written in 2010. It still complements to the modern organisational communication era. However, following rapid globalization and communication trends, this literature scope can be now enriched, and new perspectives added. The author has done so by using updated publications and including recent books, which consider newest trends such as technologies and social media influence on organisational communication.

Initially, the author presented the research topic idea to the handling manager and consulted with him over the relevance and necessity of the following research area in organisation. The handling manager approved the idea of the research stating that outcomes of such type of work are always exciting and useful for the Lufthansa Cargo management team. The previous research was conducted a long time ago, which creates interest in having updated results on internal communication topic in the Helsinki office. Additionally, Wild’s research question was: *“How effective and efficient is internal communication in the case company and what are the communicational weak points?”* The author’s research question, on the other hand, tries to explore what changes occurred with internal communication in the case company’s office, if any; what they key strong and weak points of internal communication can be identified and if there is a need for management recommendation.

4.1.4 Interviewee profiles

Helsinki office of Lufthansa Cargo AG consists of 8 people including the intern in addition to two people working for Lufthansa Cargo at the GHA office. To give a clear overview of the Helsinki office team, the author described profiles of each employee mentioning most important background information and main tasks that the person focuses on at work. Answers to the interview questions were kept anonymous in the research paper to achieve the most accurate answers possible without the fear of being publicly explored. For this reason, the author named each interviewee “interviewee A, B, C, etc” to enable the reader to go through the results section with an ease and be able to have an overall understanding, which employee with the unique background has given which distinct answers without revealing his/her identity.

- *Interviewee A* is a Country Manager: has worked in Lufthansa Cargo since 1989. Has had various positions through the years eventually becoming the Country Manager for Finland and Baltic counties. Leads marketing and sales operations in Finland and Baltic states.
- *Interviewee B* is a Handling manager: has worked in Lufthansa Cargo Finland since 1998. Started as an intern in Lufthansa Cargo and was employed by Lufthansa Cargo in other locations before becoming the handling manager in Helsinki. Interviewee B is responsible for handling activities in Finland and Baltic states.
- *Interviewee C* is the key account manager and works in the outside sales. Started the career at Lufthansa Cargo in 1989. Also had multiple roles before becoming the key account manager.
- *Interviewee D* is the key account manager. Worked in outside sales since 2010. Before becoming part of Lufthansa Cargo team, worked in another international company related to logistics.
- *Interviewee E* is part of the inside sales team. The person joined in 1989. The following interviewee together with two more members conduct inside sales

tasks such customer communication, promotion of available capacity in the aircraft when needed, etc.

- *Interviewee F* is the second person who is part of inside sales team. Joined the team two years ago. Previously, worked for 5.5 years in GHA office for Lufthansa Cargo. Interviewee F and 3 more employees did all documentation work for Lufthansa Cargo several years ago.
- *Interviewee G* is another member of inside sales team. Joined Lufthansa Cargo in 2000 as an accountant. After, worked as sale steering. Later, marketing function was added (mailing). In 2014, joined inside sales team.
- Two employees are part of operational team at Ground Handling Agent premises:
 - *Employee X*- joined the team in the middle of November for 6 months due to temporary job relocation of the previous employee. Employee X was not interviewed because of insufficient amount of working time at Lufthansa Cargo.
 - *Interviewee H* – worked in LH Cargo for 6.5 years. He or she is a team leader in operational team. Key activities of the following job are checking plane capacity, booking and planning activities and flights optimization, customer communication.

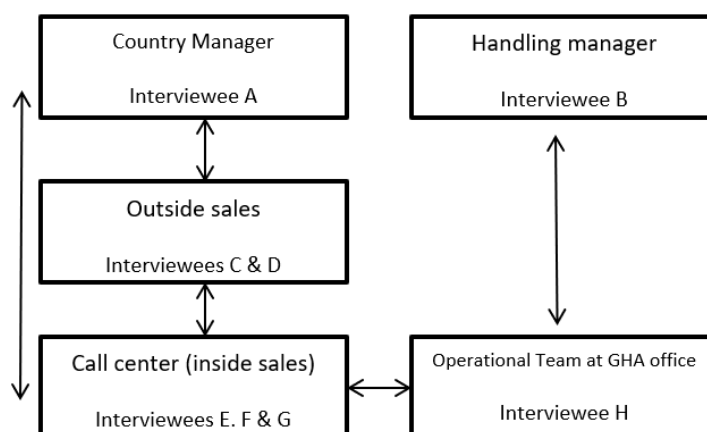


Figure 9; Interviewees of Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki office; Ivanova (2018)

4.1.5 Interview questions

To conduct proper interviews and answer the research question, the author created several interview questions which assisted her in receiving answers needed. Interview questions were chosen based on results from the Laura Wild's research paper and the theoretical framework created by the author. For the efficiency purpose, the author decided to group several questions into specific sections as some questions complemented each other and gave an important overview of the specific topic. Additionally, one question related to consulting services used in Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki office was omitted, as it turned out that the consulting services were not related in any way to internal communication topic. The following interview questions were asked to 8 interviewees:

1. What guidelines on internal communication are in LH Cargo internally? (how guidelines are formed, who can affect them)
2. Describe for me typical communication process in the office. (Specifying all channels, most used channel, communication process, frequency of communication)
3. How are you satisfied with efficiency of communication on a scale 1-10 and why?
4. What challenges or issues do you see in internal communication now?
5. What positive or negative changes have occurred during the past 8 years?
6. How international do you find company culture in the Helsinki office?
7. How would adding more channels or more modern channels would affect performance in LH cargo Helsinki?
8. Name practical suggestions for implementation

Table 2; Matrix of interview questions and topic areas; Ivanova (2018)

Topic area	Supportive questions
Functionality and interactivity of internal communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What guidelines on internal communication are in LH Cargo internally? 2. Describe for me typical communication process in the office. 3. How are you satisfied with efficiency of communication on a scale 1-10 and why? 4. How international do you find company culture in the Helsinki office? 5. How would adding more channels or more modern channels would affect performance in LH cargo Helsinki?
Internal communication tendencies occurring after the previous research	What positive or negative changes have occurred during the past 8 years?
Internal communication challenges	What challenges or issues do you see in internal communication now?
Employees' suggestions for improvements	Name practical suggestions for implementation

5 Interview findings

5.1 Functionality and interactivity of internal communication

The author described internal communication in the case company by presenting interviewees' views and answers on internal communication structure, guidelines and channels and relating them to the theoretical framework.

Generally, all interviewees shared the same opinion on the fact that there are no external guidelines on communication in Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki office. All instructions are created internally. Interviewee C supports this by adding that it is

always possible to leave feedback for the country manager and communication is functioning in both ways. Interviewee E summarises:

Country manager is a facilitator, but others can always comment and propose new solutions. Flow of communication is horizontal, and the input is equal. The country manager keeps memos of meetings and distributes to everybody in timely manner. No internal hierarchy takes place. [interviewee E]

The following statement is related to communication models expressed by open library (2018). Lufthansa Cargo in the Helsinki office turns out to have transactional, or a so-called modern communication process model. All necessary components such as feedback and interactivity take place. Additionally, by looking at these answers, internal structure suits the description of the wheel structure with the slight combination of all-channel structure described by Robbins (2016). Communication easily functions upwards and downwards. However, one person acts as facilitator being the main information distributor.

There are four main channels used in LH Cargo Helsinki internal communication: email, face-to-face, calls and meetings. No other channels are used as often as the four listed ones. The most preferred and used channel is email because of the nature of business. A lot of information is received constantly, meaning that emails are easy to distribute, and everyone is an equal receiver.

Interviewee A explains that there is a wide variety of meetings taking place which are tailored for various purposes. Everyone participates but it depends on the nature of the topic in each case. Environment is very flexible allowing some participants to leave the meeting earlier if information loses relevance for them. There are several types of meeting in Helsinki office:

- Strategic meetings- on demand: campaigns, decision-making meetings
- Handling meetings- monthly.
- Weekly operational sales meeting
- Biweekly handling meetings
- Discussions one to one- based on demand or with bigger team
- Yearly personal performance discussions with staff one to one

- ECI (employee commitment index) meeting based on demand, 1-4 times year
- Strategy meetings 2-4 times year

This goes to prove Robbins's (2016) theory on the channels functionality and richness in the case company. The choice of Lufthansa Cargo is very interactive and functional as it allows information richness. Rich channels enable direct verbal and non-verbal communication, while written channels allow precise information exchange and processing of large information quantities. Additionally, meetings are structured effectively. They are multi-purposed but have clear goals. As a result, productive discussions take place. Furthermore, as all interviewees note, meetings environment is flexible but efficient. According to Hartley (2015) and his *six principles for making the meeting effective*, the above-mentioned principles are the cornerstone of successful meetings. Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki team use these principles in the weekly meeting routine.

Interviewee H shares the view on the guidelines but adds some additional information. He or she states:

There are no guidelines internally, only externally or only for the customer side. Channels are regular. Meetings are quite rare, only operational workshops with sales team. Also, meetings take place more with the handling manager rather than with the country manager. Communication frequency depends as the operational team is very independent. [interviewee H]

As a result, the following interview answers combined with theory result in the fact that communication is mostly interactive, allowing free feedback. Communication functions horizontally, while a rich channel choice supports the successful internal communication process. Operational team seemingly might lack some interactivity as it is in ground handling agent's premises aside from the main office, and primary communication channels are phone and email followed by meetings and face-to-face communication.

5.2 Internal communication tendencies occurring after the previous research

Interviewee A does not recall drastic tendencies in the mentioned period. However, interviewee A together with interviewees B, C, E and G agree on the fact that organisational structure has changed, which resulted in communication and process related differences. The following information proves to be true if looking back at the *case company* section describing this organisational change. Before January 2017, Helsinki had to report to Stockholm. Now, Helsinki and Baltics are the separate market, that only reports to Frankfurt without intermediaries. Same interviewees add that the hierarchy level has decreased since then. Interviewee C comments that the team has reduced organically due to the C-40 (cost cutting program) which resulted in decreased hierarchy in the office. Interviewee B adds more insight on the topic:

Cost cutting program is part of that reorganisation to cut costs. Before, there were four areas and around 20 regions underneath. That was changed. Currently, Helsinki office reports not to Stockholm as previously but to Frankfurt as it happens to be the new region head office. [interviewee B]

Currently, the total amount of employees including the intern is 10, while in 2010 it was 13 persons. Earlier, individual conflicts took place. Some people were more demanding, not everyone was satisfied with amount of information given to them. Interviewee B points out that now this issue does not take place anymore.

Interviewee C adds that during the years 2010-2015 every outside sales manager was supervisor of every inside sales person. It was called a tandem system. Now the country manager is head of inside sales team and handling. Interviewee C agrees: "When it was more inside sales people, it was useful to have mentors. It was good to stop mentoring as it was not relevant for outside sales to be disciplinary and that only increased bureaucracy." The following tendency is related to organisational structure and organisational change. Thus, it was not part of the theoretical framework as the author's research paper aimed to uncover only internal and organisational communication related topics. Hence, the fact that organisational change was a significant tendency, brings an interesting input to the research and leaves space for writing further research papers in this area.

Interviewee A recalls a second significant change. He or she discusses that in 2016, meetings were bi-monthly and were approximately two hours in length. Additionally, the inside sales team did not participate in the meetings. They were updated by their

mentors from the outside sales. The following structure was inefficient and hierarchical in interviewee A's opinion. Additionally, the meeting time was too long which made the focus vague, while the meeting frequency was not high enough to discuss current and future issues. The following corresponds to the theory from section 2.4 related to channels. When face-to-face and meeting channels are not used properly, the focus is lost making communication inefficient and a burden for everyone.

Consequently, Interviewee A mentions that meeting set-up was changed. Meetings became weekly while the meeting time was reduced by half. Everyone was now part of the meeting but could leave whenever a specific issue was not of relevance to the person or the group. The country manager developed a meeting agenda each time, with specific tasks, which needs to be either discussed or resolved immediately. In the end, meeting minutes are always sent out to all participants. These actions correspond to *cultural guide* discussed by Robbins (2016) and Stuart's (2015) *six principles for making the meetings effective*. Interviewee A completely reconsidered the meeting setup and made necessary corrections. He or she applied empathy or so-called emotional intelligence to allow participants to be flexible with meeting presence depending on the need and give their opinion. Interviewee A used *imperative of proactivity* principle, thinking of agenda and meeting goal in advance. Eventually, interviewee A applied a *high-quality principle*, making sure that all employees were satisfied.

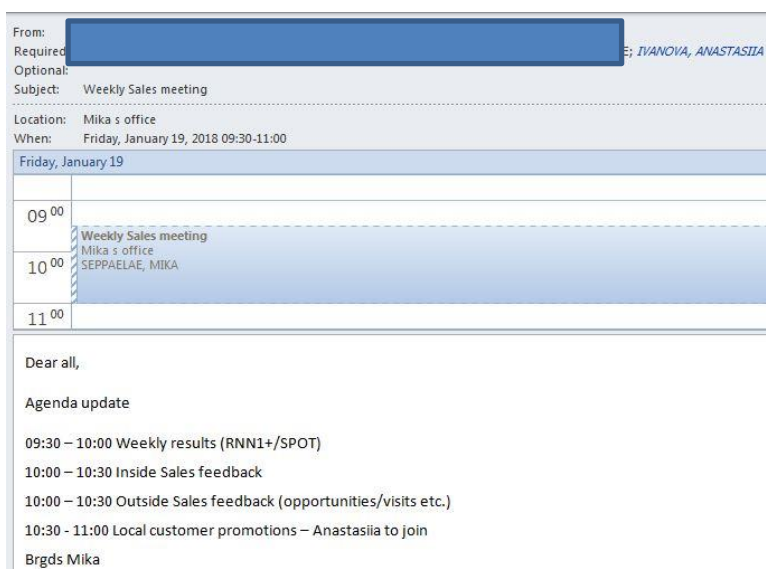


Figure 10; Meetings' agenda example; Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki (2018)

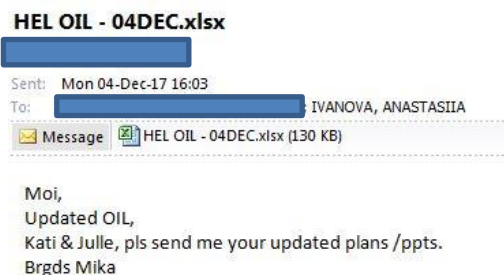


Figure 11; Minutes after the meeting example; Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki (2017)

Interviewee G states that Interviewee A is a great leader who fosters the positive change. He/she comments: “During last few years interviewee A thought on how to work on this information flow and what to optimize. Eventually, everything has improved considerably”. The importance of the good leader who can be a facilitator was highlighted by Argenti (2015) as one of the postulates of success. The leader in the case company also applies an *orchestra principle* being an efficient “conductor” in the office settings.

Finally, all interviewees agree that there are more discussions than before. Interviewee E assumes:

Earlier we have already tried to solve communication issues through the years. With trials and mistakes, it worked out. Before, more challenges arose because of hierarchy. Now this is gone. We now have an organic and balanced team, where everyone can knock at the country manager’s door and discuss any concerning topics. [interviewee E]

After the meeting set-up change, two-way communication was encouraged on all levels creating a channel richness, which according to Robbins (2016) guarantees diverse and effective communication. Interviewee A allows informal communication whenever necessary. According to Argenti (2015), successful communication can be achieved if following these guidelines. The following guidelines are already proven to be followed by the case company team.

As a result, some tendencies improved in 8 years’ time. Lack of communication interactivity is not an issue anymore as well as lack of communication activities

coordination and hierarchy problem. Those issues were resolved by the actions of the group leader or effects of organisational change.

5.3 Internal communication challenges

During the interviews, several main communication challenges have been identified, which are information overload, excess of channels and organisational culture conflict.

5.3.1 Information overload

Interviewees C share the same point of view on the amount of information distributed. Interviewee C quotes that:

Never ending challenge is amount of information and its relevance. It is sent to everyone but hard to find out what you really need. Country manager receives all information and based on his/her observations tries to filter it as efficiently as possible. Also, the handling manager partly does this job as some handling information can come only thorough him. [interviewee C]

Although being related to overall internal communication, most interviewees present Frankfurt as the main cause of the issue: "If Frankfurt sends incomplete information to us, then we can't change anything but also can't disobey." - says interviewee E. The following image of Frankfurt is similar selected perception challenge phenomena described by Robbins (2016). When the main office sends out information in a hierarchical way and often not structured enough, employees start to eliminate some information coming from head office as it does not prove itself accurate and flexible. Additionally, the inability of the Helsinki office to affect communication flow coming from the head office matches the challenge identified by Stuart (2007) and Lu (2003) The following behaviour creates rumours internally and fosters grapevine communication. Consequently, there is a lack of satisfaction in internal communication coming from the head office for these reasons.

Besides, interviewee F adds that there can be communication disruptions, which decrease communication effectiveness:

On Friday evenings or when sudden problem with shipments arise communication worsens. Also, busy autumn season could be one of the reason affecting ability to receive communication. Additionally, recent rotation of team members in operational team at ground handling agent premises can affect the situation. [interviewee F]

These can be related not only to information overload but also to noise challenge identified by Hartley (2015), which decreases communication effectiveness as noted by one interviewee. Additionally, the challenge, emotions, discussed by Robbins (2016) complements the statement about inability to actively decode communication on Friday evenings when the working day is over.

Finally, the highest responsibility on preventing information overload comes on the country manager. Interviewee F discusses that the country manager is responsible for filtering and distributing information. The problem is not to overwhelm others. On the other hand, the country manager might decide not to forward something important because of personal assumptions, communication topic and lack of time. Here, the leader faces the issue of context mentioned in communication strategy section 2.7.1 and information filtering issue from section 2.6. Country manager's challenge is to constantly consider the context of delivered information to send it at right time and using the right mode. Additionally, country manager should avoid any biased filtering while distributing information for others.

5.3.2 Excess of communication channels

Interviewee D explicitly expresses: "there are too many channels!" He or she then continues that there are too many ways of communicating because of Lufthansa Cargo structure in general. There are process based news, email, share point and a social networking app, Yammer. It is crucial to know the place where information can be. Interviewee B adds that this multi-channel chaos urges to use a pull principle which is not always effective when there is a large amount of work and information to dig. No guidelines on channels and content are provided by the head office. Interviewee B adds valuable information:

Information or even instructions and action requests are on different channels. Topic of handling and sales communicated separately to country and handling managers but often topics are crossing. That's why both managers often receive information twice but with slightly different focus and message. Example is dry ice restrictions. It is an operational issue but also important for sales to know how much they can book on the plane. So, it is urgent to be very attentive. Handling manager got dry ice information from 3 different channels. [interviewee B]

In communication trends section, usage of shared files and e-base social networks in addition to high variety of channels to be used in the company was constantly highlighted as the future of internal communication. Additionally, the trend digitalisation was above all in regards with internal communication development. Interestingly, the following trends do not seem to correspond to reality. There is a high controversy between the call of modern journals to use multiple digital channels at the same time and the responses of employees from the case company. All interviewees mentioned in during the interview that there is currently a high channel inconsistency and high variety of different channels used. However, they saw this trend as highly negative one affecting the easiness of pulling needed information and consistency of information flow. When asked if more modern channels and technologies would increase efficiency, all employees answered negatively. All interviewees expressed their opinion that four major communication channels plus one common shared file would provide the highest efficiency in internal communication. This leads to the conclusion that statements coming from modern journals calling for multiple digital channels to increase efficiency do not turn so efficient.

5.3.3 German organisational culture

Generally, intercultural communication was not identified as a problem within the Helsinki office. However, there seems to be the conflict between organisational culture structures and employee's culture. Interviewee D expresses that there is certainly a German influence on organisational level which affects Helsinki in all ways. He or she notes that the head office in Germany sends out very process-based instructions. Initially, the process is created in Frankfurt, and Helsinki office should adjust actions around it. Finnish company culture varies in this aspect as Finnish employees prefer to first practice different actions before establishing a fixed process. Interviewee D

mentions that in this situation neither the country manager, nor the rest of the team can influence the style of communication coming from the head office.

This challenge relates to Wendy Hall's cited in Blundel (2013) organisation styles and Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Western organisations such as Lufthansa Cargo have high assertiveness and high responsiveness while North organisational culture has low assertiveness and low responsiveness. In addition, according to Hofstede, Finland substantially differs from German culture in terms of masculinity, long- or short-term orientation and indulgence. As a result, these differences on organisational and individual level create intercultural conflicts. It could be slightly more challenging for Finnish employees to work with strongly West organisational style. Although North and West organisational styles are not completely incompatible, North organisational culture fits Nordic employees more. Plus, communication from head office comes solely from German employees which then rises the cultural misunderstanding in Hofstede's cultural dimensions. (Blundel, Ippolito and Donnarumma, 2013 and Hofstede, 2001)

5.4 Employees' suggestions for improvements

Before answering the question about potential areas of improvement, interviewees were asked about their satisfaction rate on the current situation. 7 employees have indicated that on the scale 1-10 they choose number 8 to characterize their satisfaction level, while Interviewee H has chosen number 10 stating that he/she is completely satisfied with communication. Following these answers, it was predicted that not all interviewees had improvement proposals. Four interviewees have indicated that there is nothing visible in their view that needs improvement. Interviewee A has indicated that generally that is the ongoing process: "one adjusts it all the time by evaluating together with the team". Interviewee A is quite happy now that interviewee B is always finds time to be at the sales meetings, and that for 28 years it is the best shape of communication.

Interviewee D has a suggestion to limit the number of channels and define their purpose more clearly: "creating a search function and good structure ensures that information is read and understood correctly. Also, everyone must be responsible personally receiving communication, not only the country manager". Interviewee F

gives slightly different perspective on information. He or she thinks that sharing more information is better than sharing less. He or she adds that search functions are now very advanced, and amount of data is not an issue anymore.

Interviewee B completely shares interviewees' D and F point of view. He or she urges to share more information with one another. Simultaneously, interviewee B would like all employees to use general shared platform instead of various small ones. Additionally, instead of only pull principle, some guidelines for shared file usage or reminders are required. Finally, interviewee B mentions that established electronic and paper filing system with folder structure matching electronic structure could theoretically deal with the vast amount of information in Lufthansa Cargo Helsinki office. All interviewees however, support the idea that a perfect solution for handling internal communication is hard to find as it is in the company business to have constant flow of information coming to Helsinki which is sometimes hard to process for employees.

5.5 Recommendations to management

According to conducted interviews, there was a visible in the quality of internal communication since 2010. Satisfaction rates are high while some major challenges were reduced or disappeared. As a result, the author does not think it is necessary to provide a large variety of recommendations to management in this case. The author thinks however, that several minor aspects should be considered.

Initially, employees identified information overload as the main challenge in internal communication in the Helsinki office. Although, this challenge is partly related to the information distribution coming from the head office and cannot be tackled internally, some aspects could be possible improved in the Helsinki office in the long run. Barrett (2014) in her *internal communication strategy establishment* theory mentions that information overload and message distribution challenges prevent successful communication. To possibly resolve the issue, she described possible actions, which could help to achieve more accurate message distribution. Important concepts such as context, delivery mode and characteristics of audience are described there in detail. The author hopes that the following strategic framework with assisting questions and

examples in combination with interview answers, which support the existing challenge, can assist the management team.

Additionally, an attempt to communicate with the head office about channel reduction and channels usage specification could boost the ability of employees to deal with information overload. Despite the encouragement of modern sources to use all possible channels in organisation, it was proven to be wrong. Inconsistency of communication channels discussed by Barrett (2014) creates a chaos in information decoding, and results in low motivation. Hence, if the discussion with upper management or other internal departments is possible regarding the channel optimization and specification; and if other parties agree to act and optimize the flow of information, it could visibly impact the situation. Employees would be able to access some information independently knowing where it is, which could eliminate some filtering work for the country and handling managers.

Lastly, interviewee G previously mentioned that some communication disruptions could take place because of recent employee turnover in the operational team. Interviewee F adds that when he or she worked in operational team, there was some lack of gatherings and trainings together with all members. Interviewee F states: "I did meet the LH Cargo staff very briefly when I started working in operational team, but first real workshop/event together was organized only couple of years later." Although interviewee F mentions that the following situation has improved since then and more trainings take place now, the author assumes that it might not be enough with the current situation of employee turnover. However, the author was not able to gather considerable amount of data to confirm this statement as interviewee H provided only general information related to this topic. The author presumes that providing more group gatherings and trainings together with operational team members, when possible, could reduce a negative turnover effect and integrate all members faster into effective communication process.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Strengths and weaknesses of internal communication in the case company

To summarise the key points related to internal communication in the local subsidiary of the case company, the author listed the main strengths and weaknesses in the Helsinki office in this section. Additionally, she identified controversial moments from the interviews, which either did not take place in 2010 or did not match statements coming from the theoretical framework.

The main strengths in internal communication that the author identified after the research are the presence of the strong leader, effective organisation of the meetings, two-way communication and channel richness. Since these points were already raised by the author throughout the *results* section with reference to the relevant authors in the theoretical framework chapter, the same information was not repeated here. However, the author wanted to note that she sees constant revision of current challenges by the team having an equal right to express their opinions as the cornerstone of internal communication success. Interviewee E confirms that in previous years ECI meetings showed a low internal communication interactivity. Team leader and the team reacted to the problem and tried different communication models before the optimal one was found. Now interviewee E notes: “Data from ECI shows that internal communication has strongly improved nowadays comparing to before.” Consequently, flexibility of team members in the Helsinki office, free flow of communication and constant will to improve resulted in identified strengths.

The author sees that weaknesses in communication include mixed message distribution, information overload, selective perception, filtering and current employee rotation in GHA premises. However, one of the main factors, which leads to some of the listed weaknesses turns out to be the organisational structure of the company. The following finding was not highlighted as strongly in the previous research, where lack of interactivity and unbalanced team in addition to internal hierarchy were the main problematic factors. Whereas in recent years, after the hierarchy was reduced internally in Helsinki, previous major problems vanished giving the author the opportunity to capture this weak point, which both directly and indirectly impacts internal communication in the Helsinki office. Organisational structure affects the way

information is received by the Helsinki office. However, another factor which can affect the existence of these weak points is the nature of the company business. Interviewee D thought that the nature of company's business could be potential reason for some of the communication problems including overload. Since information flow is so large and constant in the aviation industry, communication challenges can be increased due to this factor.

Although the intercultural aspect in the Helsinki office such as intercultural communication played an important role in the results of the previous research in 2010, it was not a significant finding in this follow-up research. Some interviewees noted that internationality decreased in recent years followed by the increased usage of Finnish language. Another half of interviewees state that international level stayed the same because of constant rotation of international interns, one German employee in the Helsinki office, and more globally, the presence of an international team from the Baltics. None of the interviewees spotted the positive or negative tendencies in the Helsinki office related to intercultural aspects or intercultural communication. Seemingly, it does not significantly affect internal communication flow as all employees speak English and Finnish languages, and the working team is balanced and organic.

6.2 Recommendations for further research

Several recommendations can be advised for conducting further research related to communication in Lufthansa cargo Helsinki subsidiary.

First, the author recommends conducting a research paper, which analyses the impact of organisational structure and organisational change on Lufthansa cargo Helsinki office performance. Organisational change was brought up by several interviewees multiple times in results section. However, this was not a major focus in the author's thesis paper. Creating a research paper with more insights on organisational structure and organisational change aspects could bring thought-provoking results.

Second, some interviewees indicated that the quality of information received depended on the amount of work, time of the day and the mood of employees related to general reasons or company's current performance. This leads to conclusion that the topic of employee motivation and its effect on communication performance can be a substantial

and valuable research topic. Employee motivation topic is very vast having dozens of motivation theories and organisations behaviour models. The author sees an opportunity to collect interesting findings by concentrating on employees' motivation.

Finally, in the author's opinion, it would be sensible to conduct a follow-up research of internal communication in the case company in 5-7 years' time. In several years, the effectiveness of the following analysis and recommendations to management could be evaluated again and possibly revised.

6.3 Self-assessment

The author wanted to reflect on her performance during the stage of writing and after completion of the research. One of the biggest benefits of conducting the research was understanding the case company processes in greater depth. The author has seen one side of the organisation while completing the internship there. However, digging into the theoretical part and communication processes and understanding the interdependence of organisation functioning and useful communication taught the author a lot about multicultural organisations and their structure.

The author learned a vast amount of new information related to the topic itself. Although the author's degree programme included courses on communication, it was not her major during either her studies or her internship. Hence, this experience broadened her expertise of internal and organisational communication and gave her a deeper understanding of this area.

The author's challenge during the research was to select only necessary pieces of information which would bring valuable insights for the reader. This was a demanding task during both theoretical and practical parts. It took some effort for the author to determine which information in the framework was the most relevant one for interview answers in *results* chapter. Consequently, some parts had to be revised and shortened. Another challenge was to analyse vast amount of data from the interviews and be able to present it in a succinct and understandable way with highlighted key outcomes. The author used different matrices and prioritised information according to relevance.

Eventually, the author mastered time-management and discipline skills. As the author wrote the research paper simultaneously with the internship, both activities consumed a lot of effort. The deadlines were quite tough and required the author to act on time and responsibly while making her research schedule. The author had to learn to multi-task and balance between two activities finding enough time for writing the research paper, which of as high-quality as possible.

Results from the interviews and outcomes of the research were highly valuable for the author in many ways. After working in the case company for six months and analysing internal communication process, she got accustomed to the organisation and was genuinely interested in understanding company's communication processes so that she could improve it. She was also eager to use identified weaknesses to come up with innovative and helpful suggestions. The author was pleased to discover visible progress of internal communication in the case company in comparison with the situation 8 years ago. Definite improvements in the processes prove that having a friendly and balanced team as in the case company makes it possible to achieve strong improvements in generally short amount of time. The author also hopes that her research was beneficial for the case company itself and provided it with some findings or facts, which were useful for management and the team.

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